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10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

28 January, 1988.

From the Private Secretary

See David.

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH THE NORTHERN IRELAND SECRETARY

The Prime Minister and the Northern Ireland Secretary had a talk yesterday evening in which they covered:

- Stalker/Sampson. The Northern Ireland Secretary said that he would be taking questions in the House on 28 January. He would make clear that he would be looking into the management and organisation of the RUC in the light of the Stalker/Sampson report, and that disciplinary proceedings would be considered. There would be a further statement as soon as this consideration had been completed. The Northern Ireland Secretary said that the Irish Government had reacted strongly to the Attorney-General's statement, but there were also signs that they wished to avoid damage to the Anglo-Irish Agreement. There would be a meeting of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference early next week. It was noted that the Taoiseach had not so far sought a meeting with the Prime Minister in the margins of the Brussels European Council, but it could not be excluded that he would do so.

- Sinn Fein/SDLP contacts. The Northern Ireland Secretary gave the Prime Minister an account of the background to these contacts. It was quite clear that the Government should not be involved in any way. But there was some evidence of disillusion within Sinn Fein with the policy of violence. The Prime Minister was very sceptical of Sinn Fein's motives in seeking contacts, and thought it unwise of the SDLP to have agreed to a meeting. She would continue to make clear in the House her view that it was wrong to have contacts with parties which supported violence.

- Contacts with the Unionists. The Northern Ireland Secretary gave the Prime Minister a brief account of his most recent meeting with the Unionist leaders at which they had put forward some ideas for administrative devolution, broadly on the lines of a County Council system.

- Redeployment of the Army in Northern Ireland. The fact that this had attracted little public comment and no statement by the Irish Government was very welcome.

- Extradition Arrangements with the Republic. There was a brief exchange on the problems which have arisen over the backing of warrants and the further proposals it is intended to put to the Irish Government.

your diary.
C.D. Powell

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Northern Ireland Office.

AR 28/10.